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THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY

THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C. Shasta Abbey is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Soto Zen Church and is located in Mount Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and follow the teaching and example of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

TRUSTEES: Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C.
Rev. Jisho Perry, M.O.B.C.
Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.
Rev. Saido Kennaway, M.O.B.C.

ABBOT: Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.

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THE JOURNAL OF THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is published as a service to all those who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal, members and friends of the Priory are able to share their experience and understanding of Buddhist training. Opinions expressed in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Abbot, the Editor, or Throssel Hole Priory. The Journal is published quarterly and costs £6.00 p.a.

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Editor:	Rev. Chushin Passmore, F.O.B.C.
Assistant:	Rev. Alexander Hardcastle.
Proofing:	Rev. Fuden Nessi, F.O.B.C.
Photos:	Rev. Mokugen Kublicki, M.O.B.C.

Throssel Hole Priory
Carrshield HEXHAM
Northumberland
NE47 8AL

Phone: Haltwhistle (0434) 345204

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News from the Tiger's Lair

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‘... And to the source kept true.’ Part 2

The middle way is not a great and wide path between the opposites of good and evil, being narrower than a razor's edge. Dogen Zenji has often been accused of narrowness of mind and even a sort of Buddhist puritanism, but this is extremely unfair and comes from a total misunderstanding of the middle way. To understand the middle way correctly is to understand how to keep true to the source: to keep true to the source means there is no way whatsoever in which one can deviate from the fundamental teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors as exemplified to a disciple by his or her True master. This means that, whilst worldly fashions and outlooks change and whilst adjustments must be made in unimportant matters in order to live in the world of one's own time, the fundamental teachings may not differ one iota in the present time from those same fundamental teachings at the time of the Buddha.

This is an extremely difficult concept for people the present day to comprehend and I suspect it has been difficult for disciples to comprehend down the centuries since what is fundamental is as elusive to grasp as the razor's edge of the middle way is difficult to walk. So often, in trying to keep to the middle way, all progress in a modern society is regarded as totally suspect. Whilst one should always view new ideas, theories and practices with caution, such caution should not be allowed to colour one's thinking and behaviour to such an extent as to paralyse growth with fear. An example of this is to be found in Dogen Zenji's teachings on lavatories and the correct use of hygiene in the twelfth century. When I was in Japan it was normal for those studying in Eihei-ji to attempt to carry out Dogen Zenji's instructions on hygiene to the letter. Since Eihei-ji is a male temple and I was not actually studying there (I made only one short visit), I have no means of knowing that what I was told is totally accurate; however, if one would keep true to the source of what Dogen Zenji was teaching at this time (and Dogen Zenji were alive at the present time), he would be inspecting the very latest plumbing fixtures to be found in a builder's suppliers---he would not be telling modern temples to dig holes and arrange fourteen clay balls for cleansing oneself every time one used the toilet. To stay with Dogen Zenji's words concerning the digging of holes and the clay balls is to stay in the twelfth century and not to understand the intent of Dogen Zenji's teaching. Dogen Zenji says that when he was in Great Sung (China) he found there the highest form of hygiene. He then goes on to describe the use of the clay balls etc. He brought back to Japan the best hygiene of the day that he could find and wanted this for his monks. I believe he would be appalled if we in Shasta did not attempt to have the best washing and toilet facilities presently available; which means, of course, that in order to understand the middle way and walk it more closely than so many of us seem to, we need to understand the intent of the actions of those teaching us. Dogen Zenji intended the finest form of hygiene---he did not intend a slavish use of pits and clay balls

down the centuries---and yet one has to be careful not to go overboard in discarding the past for present-day fads and fashions. To get too involved with modern ideas, theories and inventions is just as dangerous as to get stuck in the twelfth, or any other, century.

Most people think of the middle way as a sort of zigzagging back and forth across a fairly wide path, but, as I have said, the middle way is not even a hair's breadth wide: this means that, with regard to what is truly fundamental, no deviation whatsoever is possible. Perhaps one should say that the true place to be is the middle of the middle way and, in the middle of the middle way, there is no movement whatsoever. For a disciple to stand truly in line, either vertically or horizontally, with his master and to be a true disciple, he or she must truly understand the intent of his or her master and that intent must be truly in line with the master's master, and all those masters going before, back to the time of Shakyamuni Buddha and, indeed, to the intent of the Eternal Itself. Faith, understanding and trust are absolutely essential; for a disciple who does not yet know the certainly of kensho, trust in the master, no matter how hard it may be, has to be absolute. Trust is the soil in which the seeds of faith grow and kensho is the blossom of the tree of faith whilst certainty in the Eternal is the fruit of that blossom.

It should be understood, therefore, that, when a disciple deliberately decides to go against any of the fundamental teachings which the master tells him or her that he or she must keep, that disciple is no longer a disciple of that master and has effectively handed himself or herself a case of defeat. Obviously, no master who is a true master will ever do that which is contrary to the Precepts unless the situation is so bad that the breaking of one Precept could prevent a much worse disaster. Disciples have to believe this when they do not understand a master's actions: they should also ask the master his reasons for such actions and not become judgemental. There is the story of the master who, wishing to stop a war, used his

supernatural powers to appear in the sky: this action so frightened the armies that they forgot to fight and fled. This, however, was a misuse of the master's siddhis: they must never be used for magical purposes. The master thereafter sat down and allowed himself to die for he knew he was of no further use to disciples as a real master. As to whether or not he was right in doing what he did is not a matter for us to consider. The matter to be considered here is this: he did that which was contrary to the Precepts and he accepted the karmic consequences thereof for masters are always bound by karma. It is important to remember this.

Late last century the Japanese Emperor Meiji declared that all Buddhist monks should and could marry. As is usual with decrees from the emperor of Japan, priests flocked to obey him, but not all: those of our branch of the Manzan line did not obey for they believed that the source of the line, Shakyamuni Buddha, gave up wife and child in order to be able to search for the Truth and to help all, including the wife and child. I am the disciple of Koho Zenji. His branch of the Manzan line has no married priests in it whatsoever and there are none in Shasta. It took me many years, looking very carefully at the matter of a married priesthood, before I fully comprehended the road that I and my disciples must walk with regard to marriage. 'To the source kept true' has many meanings and many facets. We have seen in this country in recent years Buddhist priests of other ancestral lines than my own who have indeed married. We have also seen, as my master so often told me, that 'in this world there are various sorts of monks.'

This article is neither defending nor objecting to the practice of other people---it is simply saying that I am trying to keep true to the source as handed down to me by my master and, if someone wishes to be my disciple, I expect that person to keep true to the source in the same way as I have done. If he or she does not do so, then he or she is not my disciple: this remains true whether or not they have done Trans-

mission and whether or not they have had kensho prior to going against the source. It is very important to remember that one can still make mistakes after kensho and stray away from the source. When these are deliberately persisted in, the kensho, in the end, becomes a beautiful memory; it can only live and grow if one stays true to the source. When one strays from the source by going against the master, discipleship is ended and being a priest of that line is ended: such a former disciple is no longer a representative of the line. I am not speaking here of accidental strayings from the source, only deliberate ones. I accidentally strayed when I thought a married priesthood was possible. When I realised this, I opted for a celibate one. I suppose if I were a Christian I would say that there is a great difference between venial and mortal sin. As Dogen Zenji quite rightly says, 'Prior to _____ (the term used by the translator is 'conversion;' I would prefer to use the term 'kensho'), evil acts only have evil forms.' After conversion, or kensho, all deliberate breakages of the Precepts cut one off from the Eternal for one now knows, with certainty, the importance of staying true to the source. Only by true sange can one return to the source.

If emperors make laws contrary to the source, then it is a great grief to all who would truly follow the way and such followers need great courage to stay true to the source. Koho Zenji and his master, Koho Haku-gun, kept true to the source. When I was in the Far East he was often smirked about because of this. The great Buddhist historian who taught history at Sojiji, Rev. Yokesekei, being of the same generation as Koho Zenji, had also never been married and his congregation was a hundred per cent against a married priesthood; a number of congregations were not in agreement with the Emperor Meiji's changes. It took great courage to go against the emperor and, given the lightness and laxness of morals shown by many in America at the present time, the decision of the Shasta Abbey priesthood to keep true to the source of its own line will possibly not be popular, but then, who cares about popularity? There are some things far more

important than that.

To stay still in the centre of the middle way, paying no attention to praise or blame, following one's master's intentions to the letter to the best of one's ability within the confines of the Eightfold Path, whilst keeping the Precepts, is to be a true disciple and, as it was taught to me, is the means of keeping true to the source. It is important to see through the external 'fluff' put upon one by emperors and those running after the fashions of one's own time: the confusing of religion with what often passes for psychology at the present time is an example of this.

Allowing the fashions of the time to infiltrate scriptural texts and ceremonial can, and often does, create a smoke screen through which it is extremely difficult to perceive the original intent of the teaching. I am not speaking here of the way in which Christian missionaries often translated Buddhist scriptures which, although I have no proof of this, I have often felt was a deliberate attempt to show the Buddhist scriptures in a less favourable light to the Christian ones. I am speaking of something which I believe can be much more insidious. I have heard of persons who, presumably because they were not properly Transmitted themselves, considered that in order to Transmit a disciple it was necessary to take that disciple to bed. NOTHING COULD POSSIBLY BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAPPENS AT TRANSMISSION. However, if one has not learned properly since one's own master has either been lax or decided to know better than his or her own master, such terrible deviations from the source can take place. The act of embracing a disciple after ordination may seem harmless and very 'California-ish;' it can also allow the human mind to consider possibilities in a priesthood which it would be better it did not consider. The Buddha Himself was very careful not to do that which could be misconstrued. The present 'touchy-feely' fashion in California will, I hope, someday in the near future die a nice, quiet death: in the meantime, let us hope that religious people will not be enslaved by it.

These are only one or two very obvious ways in which one must keep true to the source. I do not pretend to have in any way done more than even scratch the surface of the subject very slightly, so I will end with the following: Bankei [1622-1693], one of the greatest of all Zen masters, when speaking of the shouting and beating in Zen monasteries and the telling of what are popularly called, in this day and age, Zen telegrams or Zen stories, said, in effect, that people should stop playing parlour games and simply become one with the Unborn. I say to all those who play these little Zen games with each other, 'You can't stay truer to the source than to follow Bankei's advice.' So often Zen at the present time, thanks to what I hope is a serious misunderstanding of the koan system, has degenerated into little more than parlour games here in California. If any of my readers would have the perfection of Zen, follow Bankei's advice 'and to the source keep true.' Staying in the past with the clay balls, rushing to the future with the latest in computers, running around with wives, children, liquor, smoking, and the other distractions of the present time, are not for those priests in our line who wish to stay true to the source. Being a priest is one thing; being a layman is quite another.

* * *

The Scripture of Innumerable Meanings

Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.

This article and an occasional series of articles to appear in future issues are extracts from edited transcripts of a series of lectures recorded for the benefit of meditation groups. The translation used is The Threefold Lotus Sutra by Bunno Kato and W.E. Soothill et al., published by Weatherhill. Passages are quoted by kind permission of the copyright holders Rissho Kosei-kai. Readers are strongly advised to study this translation and not rely on these notes alone for a clear insight into this scripture. D.M.]

Chapter One: Virtues

The Scripture of Innumerable Meanings proclaims the means by which one can comprehend the great depth of teaching contained within The Lotus Scripture and, more than this, it proclaims how a being can realise Buddhahood itself. The scripture sets out the ground of the Mahayana, the essence of meditation. It shows the foundation of practice upon which everything else depends.

This scripture was preached by the Buddha shortly before His entry into Parinirvana. The assembly was gathered on Vulture Peak, called Mount Grdhrakuta in the text. This is a mountain near modern Giddore in northern India, said to resemble a vulture, or to be a place where many vultures live. It was the site of the preaching of many scriptures by the Buddha.

There are hundreds of thousands of beings gathered to hear the Lord preach, including Bhikkhus, Bodhisattvas, Wheel-Rolling Kings and ordinary men and women. There are also the eight classes of guardians: gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras and mahoragas. All manner of beings are

represented, nobody being excluded. All these beings bow to the Buddha and process around Him 100,000 times.

The nature of the Bodhisattva is described so the reader has some guidance as to the direction his or her training must take in order that he or she may ascend Vulture Peak and hear the Buddha's words. The Bodhisattvas have obtained emancipation, meditation and wisdom. They have infinite, tranquil minds, free from desire and immune from delusion and distraction:

Moreover, well-knowing the capacities, natures and inclinations of all, with dharanis and the unhindered power of discourse, they roll the Law-wheel just as Buddhas do. First, dipping the dust of desire in a drop of the teachings, they remove the fever of the passions of life and realise the serenity of the Law by opening the gate of Nirvana and fanning the wind of emancipation. Next, raining the profound Law of the Twelve Causes, they pour it on the violent and intense rays of suffering---ignorance, old age, illness and death. Then pouring abundantly the supreme Mahayana, they dip all the good roots of living beings within it, scatter the seeds of goodness over the field of merits, and make all put forth the sprout of Buddhahood. With their wisdom, brilliant as the sun and moon, and their timely tactfulness, they promote the work of the Mahayana and make all accomplish Perfect Enlightenment speedily; and with eternal pleasure wonderful and true, and through infinite great compassion, they relieve all from suffering.

These are the true good friends for all living beings, the great field of blessings and the unsummoned teachers [or those ready to help even if they are not asked], and these Bodhisattvas are the peaceful place of pleasure, relief, protection and great support

for all living things....They serve as eyes for the blind, ears for the deaf and a tongue for the dumb; they turn the deranged to the great right thought. As the master of a ship they carry all living beings across the river of life and death to the shore of nirvana. As the great king of medicine they dispense medicines and make people take them....(')

Here we see the development of the Bodhisattva as one who saves all sentient beings, one who even goes so far as to make people take the medicine of the Dharma whether they want it or not. It is in understanding what this means and how this particular teaching should be applied in our own practice that many interpretations of the scripture differ. There are those who understand this as a command to preach the Dharma to all, whether they want to hear it or not, the kind of proselytizing that lacks true respect for the recipient. My own view is that the Bodhisattvas being described are clearly idealised personifications of various aspects of Buddhahood. There are those personifications who appear wrathful, and these represent the teaching of karmic consequence: they represent the teaching that comes in the form of the inevitable consequences of our own actions. If we act foolishly we experience suffering---not as the punishment of some supernatural being---but simply as the direct result of the causes we ourselves have set in motion. When we learn to be still within suffering we see that it is indeed teaching, it is one of the 'innumerable meanings' even though it can at times seem wrathful. We need to understand that the ideal of the Bodhisattva being expressed here and in many other parts of *The Threefold Lotus Scripture* is sometimes multi-faceted: at one moment Bodhisattvas appear to the human perception as impossibly perfect and free from frailty and, at others, as fellow travellers along the path. When the Bodhisattvas' perfection is being stressed it is the nature of the Eternal Buddha that is being revealed; this nature is our own nature which we can realise through serene reflection meditation. When we meditate and the mind no longer holds

on to notions of adequacy or inadequacy, we become a Bodhisattva quite unselfconsciously. The ideal and the actual are not in reality separate. However, 'we' must not assume the position of the 'Eternal', we must not elect ourselves to be the instrument of karmic retribution and decide it is up to us to give wrathful teaching to others. It is equally not our place to distribute compassion to others. Both of these approaches lead to pride. A Bodhisattva, as the *Diamond Scripture* makes clear, who thinks of himself as a Bodhisattva, is no Bodhisattva. One must simply get on with doing one's own training, working hard to cleanse oneself of all greed, hate, and delusion, of all holding back, and thus learn how to give of oneself until no self is left. What then appears is the unselfconscious Bodhisattva who does indeed bring the ideal and the actual together. To summarise this important point---although Bodhisattvas reveal perfection we should not, by reason of our frailty, see them as something other and unobtainable but realise instead that there are no such things as Bodhisattvas, sentient beings, or Buddhas, outside the great ocean of life and death. There is just the great ocean that IS all of these. This is meditation itself.

The scripture then continues with the Bodhisattva Great Adornment's description of Shakyamuni Buddha in verse:

In him there is no defilement, no contamination,
no attachment....

Serene in his wisdom, calm his emotion,
And stable his prudence.

His thought is settled, his consciousness is
extinct.

(His consciousness is immersed in stillness, unmoving,
serene rather than 'extinct.')

His body is neither existing nor non-existing;
Without cause or condition,
Without self or others;
Neither short nor long;

Without appearance or disappearance,
Without birth or death;
Neither made nor produced;
Without safety or danger;
Without right or wrong.
Sprung of benevolence and compassion,
The ten powers and fearlessness;
He has come in response
To the good karmas of living beings.

These statements are of great importance as they set out clearly right at the start that the nature of the Buddha is beyond the opposites. Buddhahood is without cause or condition. Such statements lay the groundwork for the message that comes later, that the life of the Buddha is Eternal. There follows a description of His body with many of the thirty-two marks of a Buddha being detailed:

There are thirty-two such signs,
The eighty kinds of excellence are visible,
And truly there is nothing
Of form or nonform.
All visible forms are transcended;
His body is formless and yet has form.
This is also true
Of the form of the body of all living things.

Thus all living beings are shown to have the body of a Buddha, there being no difference between our body and a Buddha's body.

The last part of the verse section contains a description of the mind that must be cultivated if one would follow the teaching. It is a section that should be carefully studied by anyone contemplating becoming a monk or anyone sincerely wishing to understand the nature of practice:

It [the mind of practice] is pure, boundless
and unthinkable (inconceivable).
Making obeisance all together,
We submit ourselves to Him

When He rolls the Law-wheel.
We make obeisance,
And submit ourselves to the sacred voice.
We make obeisance,
And submit ourselves to the Causes, Truths and
Paramitas.
One never hears without opening one's mind
And breaking the bonds of the infinite chain
of life and death.

One of the most important elements of this chapter is the description of the virtues of the Bodhisattvas and the Buddha. They reveal the depth of patience and generosity that must be cultivated.

Unsparring of his person as of his possessions,
He gave all, his head, eyes and brain,
To people as alms.
Keeping the Buddha's Precepts of Purity,
He never did any harm.....
He never became angry.....
Though cursed and abused.
In spite of long exertion
He kept his mind at peace day and night.

* * *

Notes

1. This and other quotations are from Kato, Tamura, and Miyasaka, et al., trans., *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, (New York: Weatherhill; Tokyo: Kosei, 1975). Most quotations are paraphrased slightly.

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The SOUTHERN PRIORY

After much deliberation, we have decided that the new Priory will be located in the Guildford area. For sometime Guildford has proved a convenient meeting place for the groups in the south; also, although property is expensive everywhere, some parts of Guildford and its surroundings are less outrageously expensive than other areas.

We have so far received cash donations amounting to £6,000 and covenants of £235 per month. This is an encouraging response and we are very grateful to all those who have contributed. This amount enables us to make a start and so the search for a suitable property is already under way. The search is being co-ordinated by Peter and Judy Lavin with help from Hugh Tynan. Anyone who is able to offer practical assistance should please contact Peter or Judy: Phone (0428) 725383.

It will take more than £600 a month to keep the Priory running even at the simplest level; therefore we still need more covenants and donations as without them the new Priory will not survive for long. However, I am very optimistic we will be able to open a Priory by the end of the year and that, once we get started, the necessary donations will be attracted.

Once premises have been found, we will need suitable furniture and all manner of basic essentials, plus lots of practical help. As soon as anything definite is arranged we will spread the word.

Rev. Master Daishin Morgan.

* * *

FAMILY WEEKEND 1989

This year's *Family Weekend*, August 4-6, was a great success. Six families were able to come, with a total of twelve children in all. Most families stayed at the Expedition Centre in Carrshield although two of the families were adventurous enough to pitch tents and camp in the Priory grounds (on a level clearing just below the cemetery).

The weekend's activities started Saturday morning with a kite-making session for the children; this was followed by a talk by Rev. Myoho on *Kstigarbha Bodhi-sattva*. The very busy afternoon included two rehearsals for the following day's ceremony (in which all the ceremonial jobs, except that of Celebrant, are traditionally done by children). There was also a trip to nearby Plankey Mill where the children had a good time exploring the paths and paddling in the river. They also spent some time looking for their 'peach-shaped stones,' the roundest and smoothest they could find; these stones (symbolising the Jewel of Enlightenment, the Buddha Nature within all beings) were to be offered to *Kstigarbha* the next day.

After the medicine meal, the children heard a story about a lion-beast who went on a pilgrimage; and so the first day came to an end.

Sunday morning began with more rehearsals. A new *Kstigarbha* hymn needed rehearsing, and the children had to perfect their parts in the coming ceremony. The following children took part in the ceremony and did an excellent job; the sincerity and vigour of these children was a fine example to all those present:

Chaplain	-	Eleanor Curry
Asst. Chaplain	-	Peter Richards
Three Pure Priests	-	Zoe Hurcombe
	-	Amy McGraw
	-	Julia Robinson

Asst. Precentor - Patrick Robinson
 Acolytes - Rachel Richards
 - Thomas Ferguson
 - Ben Curry
 Organist - Bryony Ferguson

The offertory at the end of *The Festival of Kstigarbha Bodhisattva* beautifully describes the life and vows of this great saint:

Kstigarbha, the Most Merciful and Compassionate, Whose vows and wishes will never see an end, converts beings inconceivable in number so that they become Buddhas, yet He is still in the position of a disciple. When all hells have been vacated and all beings are delivered, then will He be willing to realise His own Buddhahood. We pray that He will give us His blessings, both implicitly and explicitly, so that we may be predestined to join the great assembly in the Sea of the Lotus. The Bodhisattva Kstigarbha, the wonderful, the hardly to be matched, transforms and manifests in golden light and appears everywhere. All those in the six worlds, including the three evil ones, hear the wonderful Dharma because of Him....As luminous pearls does He shine on the homeward road: with His golden staff He shatters and opens the doors of the hells.....Soon we shall salute the Merciful and Honoured One on the nine-tiered lotus platform. Blessed be the One on the Mountain of Nine Flowers in the sombre world, the most compassionate, the One with the power of the ten wheels that relieve suffering, our own Honoured One, Bodhisattva Kstigarbha.....

After the Festival ceremony, the children had their usual Sunday ceremony in the Kstigarbha shrine during which they offered their 'stones' to the Bodhisattva. They watched videos of *Monkey* in the afternoon and the weekend came to a satisfying close with a delicious campfire meal and more stories from Rev. Myoho and Rev. Raymond.



....a little girl of seven
 even *may* be the teacher
 the four classes of Bud
 ists and the *mother* of
 Compassion to all living
 things....

Bryony Fergerson.



Helena Curry: Chaplain.

Behold the Blessed Mandala

Om Mani Padme Hum

Om Mani Padme Hum

Om Mani Padme Hum

Deep beneath dark waters
He sleeps a restless sleep
While the roots of fond delusion
Obscure His mind with grief.
Om - the Eternal Buddha,
Om - the Enlightened One,
Om - the Voice within my heart,
Om - the Buddha to come.

Rising through dark waters,
Drawn up towards the light,
His eyes perceive the way ahead
And His spirit taking flight.
Mani - the jewel beyond all price,
Mani - the one bright pearl,
Mani - the longing of the heart,
Mani - the Buddha's call.

Reflected in bright waters,
The Buddha Nature smiles,
And the source of great compassion
Comforts the long-lost child.
Padme - the golden lotus flower,
Padme - the precious womb,
Padme - the centre of the heart,
Padme - the journey home.

The stillness of the ocean
Beneath the howling storm,
Where the Buddhas wait to welcome Him
On that radiant dawn.
Hum - the Bodhisattva Path
Hum - the Gateless Gate
Hum - the offering of the heart
Hum - the life of faith

Behold the blessed Mandala
Where eternal life is found
Embracing all that moves and breathes
Within the Dharma Cloud.
Om - the Eternal Buddha,
Om - the Enlightened One,
Om - the Voice within my heart
Om - the Buddha to come.

Om Mani Padme Hum
Om Mani Padme Hum
Om Mani Padme Hum

C. Passmore,

* * *

(This poem has been set to music by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. The hymn was first sung here during the *Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva* at the Congregation Day in Nottingham, September 16 1989.)

* * *

Serene Reflection

Rev. Koten Benson, M.O.B.C.

[This article was first published in the *Journal of the Order of the Buddhist Contemplatives*, Vol. 4, Number 1. We are grateful for permission to reprint it here (with a few minor changes).]

The term *serene reflection* has been in general use since the time of Great Master Wanshi Shokaku [C. Hung Chih Cheng Chuehl, 1091-1157,¹ to describe the original meditation practice of the Ch'an [Zen] tradition, in contrast to the *introspecting the koan* [C. K'ang hua: J. Kanna-zen] method that was then becoming popular through the teaching of the master Daie Soko [C. Ta Hui Tsung Kaol, 1089-1163.²

'Serene reflection' is a translation of two Chinese characters: *Mo* [J. *Moku*] and *Chao* [J. *Sho*]. A study of these characters and the levels of meaning within them may be of help to us in understanding more about our practice. I am by no means an expert in Chinese so I have made use of several dictionaries, books of character analysis, and commentaries on the term itself to put together this article and ask forgiveness for its shortcomings.

The first character, *Mo*, has an element in it that means 'black' or 'darkness,' making the whole character signify 'dark, secret, silent, serene, profound' and also 'to close the lips, to become silent.'

The second character, *Chao*, has an element meaning 'the brightness of the sun.' The whole character translates as 'to reflect light, to shine on, to illumine or enlighten,' as well as 'to reflect upon, to look upon, to have insight into.'

The whole term thus becomes 'serene reflection,' 'silent illumination,'³ or 'luminescent darkness.'⁴

In the very description of our practice we have the 'light in darkness---darkness in light' spoken of in the works of the great masters of our tradition. See for example:

Hsin Hsin Ming [Faith in Mind] by Kanchi Sosan.

Ts'an T'ung Ch'i [J. Sandokai] by Sekito Kisen.

Pao Ching San Mei Ko [J. The Most Excellent Mirror---Samadhi] by Tozan Ryokai.

Mo Chao Ming [Notes on Serene Reflection] by Wanshi Shokaku.

'Komyo' ['Divine Light'], Chapter 13 of the *Shobogenzo* by Great Master Dogen.

Komyozo-Zanmai [Samadhi of the Treasury of the Radiant Light] by Koun Ejo, and many other works.

We can also see in this the origin of the references to the reflection of the moon in water. As the water of the spirit within us becomes still, clean, and bright through meditation, so does the reflection of the 'moon' of the Eternal become clear and true. There is more than 'stillness' in this, more than mere quietism. The water must be clear and bright and clean or there will only be the false 'stillness' of stagnation, a dirty pool in which the moon's reflection will be dim and shallow. This is why we are warned about the consequences of clinging to blissful states and urged to maintain a bright mind while meditating: the importance of the 'stillness within activity and activity within stillness.'

Another important point in the characters is that there is no 'thing' which can be grasped as the source of the light, nor a 'thing' that reflects the shining. Neither is the darkness or silence a 'thing' that can be grasped. This is because in the face-to-face encounter with the Eternal of meditation there is no separate self; just the serene, profound, illuminating light.

Dogen says it better than I:

Lament impurity. --

Within the silent waters of the heart
Dwells the moon, the lonely waves----
Brightness everywhere.⁵

Notes

1. Hung Chih Cheng Chueh, disciple of Tanka Shijun, & author of the *Mo Chao Ming* [*Notes on Serene Reflection*]. See poem on following page.
2. See Garma C.C. Chang, *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 66-69.
3. Another translation of *Mo Chao*.
4. See Rev. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Roshi, *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom: or How a Zen Buddhist Prepares for Death* (Mount Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1977), p. 181.
5. See *The Story of Rev. Dogen*, translated from the Japanese by Rev. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett.

Bibliography

Books consulted include Soothill & Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (Taipei: Buddhist Cultural Service); R.H. Mathews, *Mathew's Chinese English Dictionary* (Harvard University Press, 1948); Shohaku Okumura, *Shikantaza: An Introduction to Zazen* (Kyoto Soto Zen Centre, 1985); Takashi Kodera, *Dogen's Formative Years in China* (Prajna Press, 1980); Garma C.C. Chang, *The Practice of Zen* (Harper & Row, 1959); and Master Sheng-Yen, *The Poetry of Enlightenment* (Dharma Drum Publications, 1987).

* * *

Notes on Serene Reflection

Silently and serenely one forgets all words;
Clearly and vividly *That* appears before him.
When one realizes it, it is vast and without edges;
In its Essence, one is clearly aware.
Singularly reflecting is this bright awareness,
Full of wonder is this pure reflection.
Dew and the moon,
Stars and streams,
Snow on pine trees,
And clouds hovering on the mountain peaks---
From darkness, they all become glowingly bright;
From obscurity, they all turn to resplendent light.
Infinite wonder permeates this serenity;
In this reflection all intentional efforts vanish.
Serenity is the final word of all teachings;
Reflection is the response to all manifestations.
Devoid of any effort,
This response is natural and spontaneous.
Disharmony will arise
If in reflection there is no serenity;
All will become wasteful and secondary
If in serenity there is no reflection.
The Truth of serene reflection
Is perfect and complete.

Oh look! The hundred rivers flow
In tumbling torrents
To the great ocean!

Wanshi Shokaku

From *The Practice of Zen* by Garma C.C. Chang,
Harper & Row 1959

Dependent Origination

Rev. Koshin Schomberg, M.O.B.C .

[This article continues the series begun in our last issue. It first appeared in the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 3, Number 4.]

2. The Basis of Suffering in Our Present Life.

In the last article, I wrote about the first two steps of the Buddhist teaching of Dependent Origination. In these first steps, this teaching shows how beings in past existences acted out of ignorance and, in consequence, died in states of confusion and despair. This state of mind at the time of death represents an unresolved spiritual question, or problem, which will find a new form in its quest for resolution.

The next five steps in the teaching show the way in which suffering is re-created in a new form of existence. These steps are described as follows:

Mind and body depend upon relinking consciousness.

The six senses depend upon mind and body.

Contact with the objects of the senses depends upon the six senses.

Feeling depends upon contact with sense objects.

Craving depends upon feeling.

We will again look at the terms used in these steps and then discuss the basic point that these steps express.

The term 'mind and body' is the correct English rendering of the Sanskrit word *namarupam*. Translators

with a penchant for scholarly literalness have used the words *name* and *form* for *nama* and *rupam*, respectively. The problem is that these words do not clearly communicate the meaning of *namarupam*. Mind and body provide the average English speaker with a much more straightforward idea, as some Oriental Buddhist writers have pointed out.

In speaking of mind, Buddhist writers are thinking of four of the five skandhas: perception (which includes thought), feeling, volition and consciousness. In speaking of body (the fifth skandha), Buddhist writers are thinking of the six senses and the basic constituents, or properties, of matter. As I said in the previous article, the five skandhas are merely five important aspects of our constantly flowing experience; five useful windows through which we can look at our experience. In any moment of normal experience, there is some awareness of the presence and functioning of the body, which provides the base, through its senses, of the simultaneously experienced perception, feeling and consciousness. And in each moment, choices are being made.

Note that there are six senses in Buddhism. These are the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell plus the thought sense. This is just pointing out that the flow of our thoughts is no different from the flow of all our perceptions. There is no ego that creates, or experiences, either thought or any sense perception: there is just the flow of thought and perception.

The term *contact* (S. *Phassa*) is one of those Buddhist words that would benefit by being connected to a prepositional phrase to reveal its meaning: for example 'contact with sense objects.' Perceptual experience is possible only when there is contact between our senses and their objects. Or, to put it another way, if one has normally functioning senses, one cannot avoid contact with the objects of the senses, and this necessarily produces perceptual experience.

Feeling (S. Vedana) refers to that quality of our experience that is more or less pleasurable or painful.

Craving (S. Trsna) is desire, wanting, the thirst for repetition of enjoyed experiences.

We can now discuss the general point being made in these steps of Dependent Origination.

Mind and body depend upon relinking consciousness.

This means that the coming into being of this psychophysical process which I view as 'my' mind and body is the consequence of an unresolved spiritual problem. There is an element of inevitability in this: I cannot, just by wishing---or willing---it to be otherwise, avoid the full consequences of the fact that there was, at the time of someone's death, this unresolved problem. This present mind and body, with all their abilities and limitations, are the expressions of a spiritual need and provide the only vehicle we have---and the one appropriate for each of us given our particular spiritual koan---in this lifetime.

This inevitability of karmic consequence is also emphasized in the following three steps:

The six senses depend upon mind and body.

Contact with sense objects depends upon the six senses.

Feeling depends upon contact.

Where there are mind and body, there are functioning senses---the 'gates' of experience, the modes through which the world is expressed in individual consciousness. Where there are functioning senses, there is necessarily the interaction with sense objects which produces the constant flow of thought and perception. And an inextricable part of this constant flow is the experience of pleasurable and painful feeling. Such feeling is far more diverse than bodily

ainful or pleasurable feelings. It includes all our fears, joys, hates, sorrow, despair, hope: where there is thought, there is feeling; where there is any sensory experience, there is feeling. The memory (a thought) of the person who struck us may be accompanied by anger or fear or the feeling of forgiveness. The sight and bodily sensation of the bright, warm sun might be accompanied by pleasure or, if we have a sunburn or are sensitive to bright light, pain. The vision of a Buddha might inspire fear in a hungry ghost, indifference in an animal, loathing in a demon, longing in one human, devotion and love in another. The quality of feeling is always just karmic consequence---perhaps the consequence of having a particular kind of body, perhaps the consequence, as in the last example, of one's spiritual training or lack thereof. What is 'sown' in volition is 'reaped' in feeling. The kind of feelings we have depends upon many volitional factors; but that we have feelings is unavoidable.

So the question from the point of view of Buddhist training is, 'What do we do on the basis of our feelings,' for the teaching of Dependent Origination points out in the next step that feeling is the springboard of choice in addition to being its consequence:

Craving depends on feeling.

Craving refers to our development of habits based on like and dislike. Some feeling is enjoyable and we tend to want more of it. Some is unpleasant and we tend to avoid it. While this is natural enough, it lacks a sense of spiritual reality beyond our transient experience. Thus, indulgence in like and dislike---including the more sophisticated varieties represented by asceticism, stoicism, idealism and cynicism---reinforces that ignorance which is the underlying root of the spiritual problem needing resolution, the question longing for its answer.

When we undertake spiritual training we 'stand against the world to train in wisdom.' The 'world' is the realm of like and dislike---discrimination based on feeling. In training in meditation and the Precepts, we take a higher rule and one that is based in faith that there is that which transcends all our passing pleasures and pains, including the most heavenly and sublime and the most hellish and miserable. This has been called the 'Iron Man' (or Being)---the Unborn, Undying, Unmoving Eternal. The stillness of meditation is the place wherein we find the Iron Being.

The teaching of Dependent Origination is showing, in the steps that we are discussing in this article, both the limits of our humanity---we cannot avoid perception and feeling---and the dangers of living in such a way that these limits become chains of bondage. What is needed is the positive acceptance of our limits. This expresses itself in doing the best we can within them---which is just another way of describing training. For example, rather than complain about the fact that we have unhappy and desolate feelings, we can train ourselves with the faith that, since feeling is karmic consequence, the merit of training will gradually improve the quality of feeling. This is the positive use of greed and may not satisfy every idealist's view of Buddhist attainment, but it does have the advantage of starting from an acceptance of the limits within which humans are operating.

Interestingly enough, craving itself reflects a kind of faith. This is the faith that this psycho-physical process which we call our mind and body is the true reality. Great Master Dogen calls this a "mistaken viewpoint of body and mind."² Meditation undermines this misplaced faith, for meditation is the opening of the heart to the true Reality of the Eternal. The more this Reality dominates our experience, the more this body and mind are seen to be 'void, unstained and pure:' these thoughts and perceptions are not mine, they are not me; these voli-

ional impulses are not mine, they are not me; this consciousness is not mine, it is not me; this body is not mine, it is not me; these feelings are not mine, they are not me. In fact there is no 'mine' and no 'me': there is just the flow of existence (Great Master Dogen's 'Uji'),³ the reflections coming and going endlessly within the Great Jewelled Mirror of the Eternal.

Faith in the Eternal (or whatever one wishes to call It, Him or Her---it does not matter) is the proper fulfilment of the misplaced faith which provides so much of the power of craving. This is why the spiritual life has its own kind of longing---'that passion', in the words of the great Buddhist monk Shantideva, 'which makes for the cessation of passion.'⁴ It is through this longing that we begin to know the Eternal. This longing differs from ordinary greed in that, whereas greed or craving, is always directed at that which is passing, the longing for the Eternal steadfastly turns from transient objects. This is the 'nada, nada' of St. John of the Cross---'not this, not this,' or 'nothing, nothing.'⁵

The willingness to do what needs to be done in the faith that the Eternal is the true Reality of all our experience (whether we see this at all times or not) replaces indulgence of like and dislike in the life of the Buddhist trainee. Feeling will always exist while we have human form. But what we do does not have to be governed by like and dislike. In the next article we will look at the way in which suffering flows forth inexorably from craving when like and dislike are the rule of life.

Notes

1. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C.
2. See 'Genjo-koan' in *Zen is Eternal Life*, pp. 172-173.
3. *Zen is Eternal Life*, pp. 165-171.
4. Paraphrased from *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, trans. Stephen Batchelor (Dharmasala, India:

Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1979), verse 43, p. 35.

5. See 'The Ascent of Mount Carmel,' *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.D.C. and Otilo Rodriguez, O.D.C. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1973), pp 66-67.

* * *



*Amy McGraw & Rachel Richards
at the family weekend*

News

NEW PHONE NUMBER: Please take note of the Priory's new phone number:

HALTWHISTLE (0434) 345204

Monastic Events: On July 26, Rev. Alfrid Ni'hEartain formally took over the position of Head Novice at the *Head Novice's Installation Ceremony*. Rev. Alfrid will hold this important monastic job for the next three months, with Rev. Gilbert Dunbar as his assistant.

On July 25, Ruth Barnhard entered the community as a postulant.

We congratulate Rev. Alfrid, Rev. Gilbert, and Ruth and wish them continued success in their training.

From September 3-11 most of the monastic community were away visiting parents and relatives. After what is invariably a very busy summer, this annual 'family visit' week is a welcome break and a chance to spend some time with family and friends.

Festivals: On June 18, the *Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva* was celebrated. In July, as well as the monthly *Lotus Ceremony* we celebrated the *Festival of Acalanatha Bodhisattva* [The Great Immovable One] and the *Festival of Nagyaarajyuna Bodhisattva*. *Nagyaarajyuna* is the fourteenth Ancestor in our spiritual line. He was a great sorcerer before his conversion by the great monk, Kabimora, after which he was fully enlightened and discarded all false views. In Great Master Keizan's *Denkoroku* [Transmission of the Light], the story of *Nagyaarajyuna's* conversion to Buddhism is told in detail and contains the following beautiful passage:

....Your whole body is the JEWEL of the teaching; you must know that the whole ten worlds are THIS ONE BRIGHT JEWEL. Although TRUTH is like a jewel of the world it does not come from outside but appears in one's own heart; if you are ill, and hold this JEWEL, the illness will be cured: if you have this JEWEL when you are afraid, the anguish will be swept away. Divine appearances are all traceable to this JEWEL; among the seven jewels of the king of the Tomoe, there is a wonderful JEWEL from which all rare jewels are born; THIS is infinity. In the world of men there are victor and vanquished---distinctions; the jewel of the world of humans may be called a grain of rice, a jewel stone. This, however, compared with the HEAVENLY JEWEL is as something manufactured or produced which is thereafter called a jewel; the Buddha's bones and the Dharma are THE JEWEL. IT brings everything and becomes a grain of rice; IT rescues living beings: sometimes IT appears as the Buddha Body, sometimes as a grain of rice; IT manifests all Dharma; IT manifests as One; IT manifests as one's own heart; IT becomes a body five shaku high; IT becomes a body with three heads; IT becomes all things in the universe.....

On Sunday, September 3, the *Festival Memorial for Ei-hei Dogen* was celebrated.

Funerals and Memorials: On September 5, a funeral service was held in London for Anthony Lo Man Yen , a victim of the 'Marchioness' boat tragedy on the Thames. On September 18, Rev. Saido was the celebrant at a memorial ceremony for his father, Thomas Kennaway, and for the interment of the ashes in the Priory cemetery. Memorial ceremonies have also been held for Maire Ni'hEartain, Karl Kristian Merrill, Joseph Blake, James Alexander Norwell & Rebecca Jane Norwell, and Eric Rothwell.

Congregation Day: This year's Congregation Day was held on Saturday, September 16, at the Sherwood Community Centre, Nottingham. Rev. Master Daishin and sixteen of the community travelled down to Nottingham for the day to meet with the large number of congregation members and their families who had gathered there.

The day began with a meditation period followed by the chanting of *Vandana* and *Ti-Sarana* [The Three Refugees] and *Pancha Sila* [The Five Precepts]. Then Rev. Master Daishin gave a talk on *Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva* during which he explained the importance of 'listening' in training, as exemplified by the meaning of the name *Avalokiteswara*, 'She Who Hears the Cries of the World.'

A splendid buffet lunch followed and a chance to meet old friends and to relax together before the ceremony which was at 2.30. During the *Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva*, the monks process around the congregation in a large circle ('embraced within the mandala') bowing before the many pictures of *Avalokiteswara* hanging on the walls. [At a small side altar, the coloured drawings done by the children were displayed around the statue to great effect]. Then the lay trainees process around the monks and offer incense at the main altar. After the scriptures, the monks sang a new hymn, *Behold the Blessed Mandala*, (see p. 20), which expresses the longing for the Eternal within all beings.

Tea followed and a short talk. Rev. Master Daishin also presented Maureen Henderson (from the Salisbury meditation group) with her Lay Minister's *rhakusu*. We congratulate Maureen and wish her well in her future training. Around 4pm people began to pack up and leave. It was a very happy and rewarding occasion and the main organiser, Tony Head, and his small, energetic platoon of helpers deserve our grateful thanks. (A special thanks to Karen Richards for overseeing 'the children's room,' and to Diane Sellers for helping with the organ-playing).

Visits: We were pleased to welcome Fr Conrad Pepler, O.P., from July 17-21. His annual visit is much appreciated by the community and his talks are always inspiring.

Outside talks & Retreats: Public talks and retreats have recently been held in Edinburgh and Milton Keynes and a day retreat in Leeds. Monks have also visited Lancaster and Newcastle to lead the meditation group evening meeting.

In early August, Rev. Master Daishin and Rev. Mugo attended a religious conference at Atlantic College, St Donat's, South Wales. Following this, five students from Atlantic College spent a few days at the Priory in September.

Donations: We are grateful for the following donations: silk flowers, tassels, tablecloths, and a pair of silver candlesticks; volumes 3 & 4 of the *Shobogenzo*, tapes; infirmary supplies, shaving soap; hand-made Japanese paper, stamps, tools, and gloves; plants and shrubs; a cushion, calculator, crockery, kitchen utensils and supplies, and a table.

We thank David Blake for the time and expertise he has given to our Buddhist stupa project.

Begging Bowl: The Kitchen and community are always most appreciative of the cakes, biscuits, sweets etc. which the congregation kindly donate. With a growing community, our food budget is now fully stretched and the Kitchen would welcome donations of basic staple foods such as oats & cereals, grains, beans & pulses, tea, fresh fruit & vegetables, canned & dried fruit, powdered milk, peanut butter, honey, jam etc. Loaves of bread are always appreciated. We are most grateful for your continued support.

* * *

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NEW ITEMS:

TRAINING AND ENLIGHTENMENT - A Buddhist game and education tool for adults and older children.

This game was developed by Rev. Roshi Jiyu-Kennett to explain how daily spiritual training is done in the Serene Reflection Meditation school of Buddhism. Through this effective teaching of the dharma, we are shown how the Law of Karma unfolds for us all. Designed for two to six players, the game is played on a large colourful board representing the Wheel of Life. The players choose a marker (a pig, snake, or a cockerel which symbolise greed, hate, and delusion) and then throw a dice to begin their movement around the board. With complete instructions.

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In the course of his religious life Xu Yun ('Empty Cloud') travelled thousands of miles on foot visiting monasteries and places of Buddhist pilgrimage in China, Tibet, and Southeast Asia. But it is the strong faith imbuing his whole life which makes *Empty Cloud* a quiet masterpiece of religious literature.

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